

THE CHAMPION

VOL. 12

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No. 12

NEWS OF FLORIDA

INTERESTINGLY TOLD FOR BUSY READERS.

The quarantine against Cuba has been officially withdrawn, so long as the health of the island remains good.

There is a movement on foot to divide Hillsborough county, one-half being set off as Williamson county.

Florida has a magazine, "The Royal Palm." It is issued from Gainesville, C. C. Thomas editor and publisher.

The South-eastern Stock Growers Association, of Florida will hold its Annual Convention at Kissimmee, on March 29.

St. Augustine is rejoicing in the installment of a new electric light service. The city has previously used gas for illuminating purposes.

Judging by the columns of hotel rivals that appear daily in the east coast newspapers there are plenty of tourists in the state, this season.

The State Horticulturists will meet for their Annual Convention in Jacksonville, May 1, 2, 3, 4. Cheap railroad rates will be arranged for by the transportation committees. The meetings will be held in the Windsor Hotel.

Governor Broward has appointed five commissioners from the state of Florida to the Jamestown Exposition to be held in 1907. They are T. J. L. Brown, of Tampa; C. A. Ridley, Live Oak; Mrs. Katherine Eagan, Jacksonville; R. W. Storrs, DeFuniak Springs and A. A. Boggs, Coconut Grove.

Prosperity has evidently knocked at the door of the (DeSoto County) CHAMPION and managed to get inside, too. In its new, enlarged and improved form this paper is a credit, not only to the energetic and capable little woman who owns and edits it, but also to the entire county.—Florida School Exponent

The unprecedented storm that the north suffered on Sunday night and Monday morning reached Florida on Monday night giving us a warm rain of some hours duration; on Tuesday the temperature fell rapidly and a strong wind prevailed, that drove away the clouds. The temperature fell to 36° Tuesday night and Wednesday morning, with every indication of a thaw.

No Quarantine.

Chas. L. Myers, manager of the Peninsular and Occidental Steamship Co., at Miami, in a letter gives the following information:

"Am pleased to advise that as there is no real cause for quarantine restrictions against Havana the authorities of the U. S. Marine Hospital Service at Washington have notified me that their order to enforce quarantine on and after March 15, has been rescinded and the order will not be made effective as long as the present healthy conditions continue.

Our ships will continue on their

present schedules until further notice and as it can be definitely assumed that if quarantine is put on that due notice will be given, there is no reason why anyone wishing to visit Havana should not do so.

I beg that you give general publicity to this information by posting this and by personally advising your friends and those interested."

Grand Jury Presentment.

We, the Grand Jury, being duly sworn to diligently inquire and true presentment make, beg leave to report. We have carefully inquired into and examined all the witnesses that have come before our body and have found indictments against all parties violating the law wherein the evidence set before us was sufficient to indict.

We are glad to report to your Honor that we find crime in DeSoto county, State of Florida, on decrease. We learn this from the witnesses examined.

We beg leave further to report that upon reporting to the court on last Friday we stated to the court in our General Presentment that we had again examined witnesses to ascertain whether or not we could find any evidence that would tend in any manner to exculpate I. E. Cooper, who was convicted three years ago for the murder of J. H. Bowman, or that would warrant us in indicting any other party or parties as principal or accessory to said murder, and that as a result of our investigations we found nothing exculpating Cooper or nothing that would warrant us in indicting any other person for said murder. Whereupon your Honor instructed us that inasmuch as the Governor had advised that he had stayed the execution of Cooper in order that the Grand Jury at this term of the court might make a further and more complete investigation of the matter, your Honor instructed us to return to our rooms and make a full and more complete report as to the Cooper case, and upon request of J. W. Brady, your Honor instructed the clerk to summons every witness that he, Mr. Brady, desired to testify before our body relative to the killing of J. H. Bowman. We thereupon had summons issued for eighty-eight witnesses; the names of thirty-nine of said witnesses being furnished by Mr. Brady, and all of whom were summoned before our body to testify. Several witnesses live beyond the jurisdiction of this court and did not appear. Out of said number furnished by Mr. Brady, twenty-two testified before our body, fourteen in the presence of Mr. Brady and eight were examined after he had withdrawn from the Grand Jury room."

At the request of Mr. Brady we permitted him to come before our body and examine as many of his witnesses as he saw fit. He examined only fourteen and stated that he didn't care to examine any more. We then thought it wise to have all witnesses that he had on the ground testify, so that we could ascertain whether or not they knew any material facts as to the assassination of Bowman.

We also turned over to Mr. Brady all the documentary evidence sent us by Governor Broward and gave him permission to present to us any evidence in the form of affidavits or oral testimony that he

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A FOUL MURDER.

THREE KILLED AND THROWN INTO AN OLD WELL.

On Sunday morning this community was shocked to hear that a triple murder had been committed out near Pine Level. The facts so near as we can learn are: As Mrs. Jake Simmons (a colored woman) was out in her yard Saturday afternoon she was shot and killed as were also her two boys aged three and five, and their bodies dragged to a partially filled well into which they were thrown and brush thrown over them.

When the older boys of the family came home and did not find any one they went to bed, and did not until morning search for their mother; when a turpentine hand came to see the family. He helped the boys to search for her and soon made the ghastly discovery.

The alarm was at once given and the sheriff with his dogs sent for. About this time Albert Simmons, nephew of the murdered woman, and a bloody knife and part of a gun had been found in the yard. The nephew disappeared shortly carrying the gun with him. He was tracked for a mile and found near the spot where he had hidden the gun. He was at once arrested and brought to Arcadia. An inquest was held and a preliminary trial. The prisoner told different stories as to his whereabouts the night of the murder and endeavored to implicate others as helping in the murder, which he has confessed having a hand in.

The other negroes were discharged there being no evidence against them, other than Albert Simmons word. Albert Simmons is still held.

The husband of the murdered woman was in Arcadia, where he was at work for Mr. Ralls. Himself and wife were highly respected colored people, and their neighbors and friends could scarcely be held in check for the law to take its course, so indignant are they against the perpetrator of the ghastly crime. The prisoner is a young colored man of feeble mind, who has been at large altogether too long.

The Cooper Case.

Col. J. W. Brady, counsel for Cooper, has, since circuit court in Arcadia, been to Tampa, and while there wrote for the Tampa Times the following communication, which appeared in Saturday's daily: "Tampa, Fla., March 17, 1906.

To the Editor of the Times: I am very much surprised to notice by today's Tribune a labored effort to take away from Cooper the victory he had before the DeSoto county grand jury last week, and for which he had waited so long.

I say surprised, because while the Tribune has been persistently misrepresenting everything in connection with the Cooper case, against him and to his injury, I did not think it would have the gall to try to pervert this investigation as it has.

In town for three hours on business between trains, I cannot go into a lengthy statement of the Tribune's many perversions. The grand jury reported that "they left

the matter where they found it," which shows conclusively that there is too much doubt about Cooper's guilt for the grand jury to recommend anything to the pardoning board. This result came about in this way: A detective last fall reported to the governor that he thought two other people were guilty with Cooper. This was old to all of us who were familiar with the case, but the governor wanted it investigated. The first week of court, the grand jury had the detective's report with the affidavits taken by him (not by me) before them and investigated. They reported no bill and added that there was nothing brought before them to "exculpate Cooper;" this was on Friday of the first week. I objected to the language going into the report for the reason that Cooper's side had not been before the grand jury at all, but to the reverse, they had been trying to secure evidence against him. The court then instructed the grand jury, if it desired it, to sit the second week and gather all the evidence it could, I agreeing that I would furnish lists of witnesses and all data before the pardoning board. Immediately after this was arranged, the state's attorney jumped in and put—according to the Tribune's own showing—forty-eight witnesses before the grand jury, whose testimony I was not permitted to hear, and according to the Tribune's own showing, only twenty-two of the forty-one witnesses I summoned appeared, but I got my affidavits there from the pardoning board, that was the main thing; I furnished them to the grand jury, they did not furnish them to me, as the Tribune had it, and on those nine affidavits the grand jury say, after looking into the matter, that they desire to leave it where they found it. Replying further to the Tribune, I can say that I am satisfied with the action of the grand jury, although some of them were witnesses for the state in the trial of Cooper, and although the state retired the case before it, before I was allowed to go in, and when the true record is written of that investigation I expect it to be another evidence before the pardoning board that Cooper's sentence should be commuted.

Respectfully,

J. W. BRADY."

A Pleasant Social Event.

The Misses Ewing pleasantly entertained a number of ladies and gentlemen on Monday night last in honor of Mrs. Ida Holcomb, who leaves shortly for Argyle, Minnesota. Those present were Mr. and Mrs. Geo. R. Parker, Mrs. Effie Peters, Mrs. T. B. and Mrs. J. G. King; Misses Dauphine Simmons, Mary Giles, Mattie Roe and Messrs Page, Carter, Cline, F. B. Smith and Smiley Parker. Delicious refreshments were served and the happy hours passed all too swiftly. The Misses Ewing entertain royally and the event will long remain a pleasant memory to those so fortunate as to be present.

Prominent citizens of east Florida are agitating the building of a boulevard for a strip of some hundred miles down the east coast that shall by following the beach make the finest automobile course in the world.

COUNTY POLITICS

INTERESTING INFORMATION ABOUT THE CANDIDATES.

HUGH C. SPARKMAN A CANDIDATE.

Editor Hugh Sparkman, of Zolfo, this week announces himself a candidate for representative in the legislature. We can heartily recommend Mr. Sparkman, having known him for years. If elected he promises to work for the best interest of the county upon whose welfare and prosperity his own depends. He opposes the repeal of the Buckman bill and also opposes any further appropriation for the State Fair at Tampa. Mr. Sparkman is already distinguished for his bright editorials, and his ability as a politician in his home town, and we predict if elected, will be an honor to his county.

FREEMAN FOR SHERIFF.

Sheriff Freeman announces this week that he is a candidate to succeed himself. As we have before mentioned Mr. Freeman has already been elected but owing to some technicality did not qualify and was then appointed by the governor to serve until the next election. To Mr. Freeman then the office logically belongs and as he has made a most satisfactory officer, one of the very best we have ever had, we think the voters will triumphantly elect him.

S. M. SPARKMAN FOR CONGRESS.

THE CHAMPION is pleased to note the unanimity of the state press in the advocacy of Congressman S. M. Sparkman for reelection to the office he has so acceptably filled for years. We have never wavered in our belief that Mr. Sparkman is the very best man to represent us, because he has the most influence in congress of any one we could send and that's what we want in a representative, one who can do things for us.

THE COMMISSIONER QUESTION.

We don't want to stir up trouble but we are urging that the county commissioners shall be voted for as other candidates are, by voters all over the county instead of in the home district. The commissioners transact business for the whole county and are in no sense local officers and as such all the people should be allowed a voice in their election or rejection.

HOLZENDORF WILL RUN.

R. L. Holzendorf thro' the Zolfo Advertiser announces his candidacy for county commissioner from his district. This is Mr. King's district, but we understand he will not again accept the office. Mr. Holzendorf is an upright, progressive citizen and will, doubtless, if elected serve his constituents acceptably.

C. S. BUSHNELL FOR COMMISSIONER.

C. S. Bushnell is a candidate for county commissioner for this district and although he has not publicly announced himself his friends are firmly of the opinion that no better man can be found for the place.

LANGFORD WILL BE A CANDIDATE.

We have it from W. C. Langford, our present tax collector, that it is his intention to again run for the office he now occupies, rumors to the contrary notwithstanding.